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RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 4332
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUEAHLH/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION WASHINGTON DC
RUEPICA/USCIS WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 000942

SIPDIS

STATE FOR CA/VO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [CVIS](#) [PTER](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR HELP ELIMINATING WATCH LIST HITS ON
GOM DIPLOMATS

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas T. Riley for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: MFA Director for International Security Karim Halim, our primary interlocutor on Pol-Mil and Counterterrorism issues, requested Embassy assistance August 29 in helping two Moroccan diplomats whose names are similar to those on USG terror watch lists when they apply for visas or money transfers. Friendly governments and U.S. posts in the region could help reduce such obvious false positives, he said. End Summary.

12. (C) MFA International Security Chief Karim Halim noted that two Moroccan diplomats have had difficulty obtaining visas for official travel to the U.S. and in wiring funds because their names are similar to other individuals on USG terror watch lists. Halim, who holds the counterterrorism portfolio within the MFA, said that he understood, and supported, the need for watch lists but said that procedures needed to be improved.

13. (C) Halim suggested the USG allow "partner services" in Europe and Morocco to scrub the lists and assist in deconflicting and clarifying names, spellings, regional nuances and mistakes. He also suggested Washington empower U.S. diplomatic posts to weigh in on "easy fixes" such as known diplomats or contacts through a tiered database system. (Note: This is similar in concept to the new INVEST Leahy vetting system the Department is launching shortly. End Note.). Halim also suggested empowering LEGATs or Homeland Security attaches to make front-line decisions on the "easier cases."

14. (C) Halim provided the following information on the affected diplomats:

1A. Achour, Ali
Moroccan Ambassador to the Holy See
Address: Via Giuseppe Missor, 15, 00165, Rome
DOB: 1949
POB: Oujda, Morocco
Moroccan Diplomatic Passport: A.007423

Ambassador Achour has been denied permission to wire funds to his daughter in France, where she is a student. In spite of contacts with Embassy Vatican and Treasury, Achour continues to have difficulties because he is apparently being confused with the below similarly named individual on the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list published by the Office of Foreign Asset Control of the Treasury Department:

Achour, Ali (aka Farid Aider)

Address: Via Milanese, 5, 20099, Sesto San Giovanni, Milan
DOB: 12 Oct 1964
POB: Algiers, Algeria
Italian Fiscal Code DRAFRD64R12Z30C (Individual) (SDGT)

The second diplomat, named below, has had difficulties getting official visas to travel to the U.S. to attend official meetings at the UN:

1B. Majdi, Mohammed
Director of Legal Affairs and Treaties at the MFA
Address: Rabat
DOB: 31 DEC 1953
POB: Ouled Benslimane, Morocco
Moroccan Diplomatic Passport: A.008744
Moroccan ID: A32161

15. (C) Comment: We have had numerous and increasing complaints about the problem of visa applicants well known to the embassy caught up, sometimes for months, resolving such false hits. The phenomenon has had an effect on our relations with some of our best and most important contacts. While this is not the first such complaint about financial restrictions, these are much less common. Even given the critical importance of vetting, the frequency of such complaints may indicate a need for a revision or redesign of the watch list system to allow for more flexible and/or timely decisions while still maintaining acceptable security levels. End Comment.

Visit Embassy Rabat's Classified Website;
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>

Riley